IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A retractable mooring line device, comprising

a housing comprising side plates

a rotatable reel comprising sidewalls affixed in spaced relation to a hub, rotatably mounted to the side plates of the housing so that the reel is capable of rotating in two directions, the sidewalls each having a series of notches about its periphery, and

a locking mechanism comprising a latching member comprising a latch positioned and configured to move axially relative to the reel between an unlocked position in which the latch disengages from the reel and a locked position in which the latch engages at least one of the series of notches about the periphery of each of the side walls of the reel engaging both side walls to prevent rotation of the reel in both of the two directions,

whereby when the latch is engaged to the notches of both side walls the reel is prevented from rotation in both of the two directions, and when the latch is disengaged from the notches of both side walls the reel is capable of rotation in both of the two directions.

2. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein ~~the housing comprises a gunnel plate affixed to a top edge of each side plate and~~ the latching member comprises a spring bearing against the ~~gunnel plate~~ housing and urging the latch toward the locked position.

3. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the latching member comprises an actuating plate exposed to an exterior of the housing.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) The device of claim 3 wherein the latching member is biased to the locked position by a spring bearing against the housing.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the latching member comprises a latch plate having notches spaced apart a distance corresponding to a spacing between the sidewalls and large enough to allow the sidewalls to pass freely therethrough.

8. (Original) The device of claim 7 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through the housing adjacent to the reel and exposed to an exterior of the housing for actuation.

9. (Original) The device of claim 8 wherein the latching member is biased to the locked position by a spring bearing against the housing.

10. (Original) The device of claim 9 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through a gunnel plate and the spring bears against a bottom plate of the housing.

11. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the reel comprises a hub mounted over a bushing comprising a self-lubricating plastic, which is rotatably mounted to a pin projecting from the housing.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11 wherein the reel is spring loaded for automatic retraction when the locking mechanism is released.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12 wherein a spring has a first anchoring end engaging the pin and a second anchoring end engaging the hub.

14. (Original) The device of claim 13 wherein the spring is contained within a casing which contains the spring against dislodgement when the reel is removed from the housing.

15. (Original) The device of claim 11 wherein the pin is rotationally fixed relative to the housing and the reel rotates around the pin.

16. (Currently Amended) A retractable mooring line device, comprising
a housing comprising side plates and a gunnel plate affixed to a top edge of each side

plate,

a rotatable reel comprising sidewalls affixed in spaced relation to a hub, rotatably mounted to the side plates of the housing so that the reel is capable of rotating in two directions, the sidewalls each having a series of notches about its periphery, and

a locking mechanism comprising a latching member comprising an actuating plate exposed to an exterior of the housing and a latch disposed on opposed sides of the hub, the latch being positioned and configured to move axially relative to the reel between an unlocked position in which the latch disengages from the reel and a locked position in which the latch engages at least one of the series of notches about the periphery of each of the side walls of the reel engaging both side walls to prevent rotation of the reel in both of the two directions, the latching member comprising a spring bearing against the gunnel plate and urging the latch toward the locked position,

whereby when the latch is engaged to the notches of both side walls the reel is prevented from rotation in both of the two directions, and when the latch is disengaged from the notches of both side walls the reel is capable of rotation in both of the two directions.

17. (Original) The device of claim 16 wherein the latching member comprises a latch plate having notches spaced apart a distance corresponding to a spacing between the sidewalls and large enough to allow the sidewalls to pass freely therethrough.

18. (Original) The device of claim 17 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through the housing adjacent to the reel and exposed to an exterior of the housing for actuation.

19. (Original) The device of claim 18 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through a gunnel plate and the spring bears against a bottom plate of the housing.

20. (New) A retractable mooring line device, comprising

a housing comprising side plates

a rotatable reel comprising sidewalls affixed in spaced relation to a hub, rotatably mounted to the side plates of the housing so that the reel is capable of rotating in two directions, the sidewalls each having a series of notches about its periphery, and

a locking mechanism comprising a latching member comprising a latch positioned and configured to move between an unlocked position in which the latch disengages from the reel and a locked position in which the latch engages at least one of the series of notches about the periphery of each of the side walls of the reel engaging both side walls to prevent rotation of the reel in both of the two directions,

the latching member further comprising an actuating plate exposed to an exterior of the housing, the actuating plate and the latch being disposed on opposite sides of a hub, and the hub of the latching member is pivotally secured to the housing adjacent to the reel,

whereby when the latch is engaged to the notches of both side walls the reel is prevented from rotation in both of the two directions, and when the latch is disengaged from the notches of both side walls the reel is capable of rotation in both of the two directions.

21. (New) The device of claim 20 wherein the housing comprises a gunnel plate affixed to a top edge of each side plate and the latching member comprises a spring bearing against the gunnel plate and urging the latch toward the locked position.

22. (New) The device of claim 21 wherein the gunnel plate is removable and the latching member is biased to the locked position by the spring bearing against the gunnel plate.